



department of Conservation and Recreation

Community Guide
For Reserving and Using
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
Athletic Fields & Facilities

Massachusetts Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) welcomes you to enjoy the parks, forests, reservations and recreation facilities throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Established in 2003, the Department combines the resources and responsibilities of two former state agencies, the Metropolitan District Commission and the Department of Environmental Management. The Department's Division of State Parks and Recreation manages the many state parks, forests, reservations and beaches found throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts from the Berkshires to Cape Cod. The Division of Urban Parks and Recreation serves thirty-six (36) communities in the greater Boston region. These communities are:

Arlington	Hull	Somerville
Belmont	Lynn	Stoneham
Boston	Malden	Swampscott
Braintree	Medford	Wakefield
Brookline	Melrose	Waltham
Cambridge	Milton	Watertown
Canton	Nahant	Wellesley
Chelsea	Needham	Weston
Dedham	Newton	Westwood
Dover	Quincy	Weymouth
Everett	Revere	Winchester
Hingham	Saugus	Winthrop

Across the Commonwealth, DCR manages and maintains a wide range of facilities which protect natural resources, encourage healthy, active lifestyles and enhance the quality of life for state residents and visitors.

Ball Fields, Courts and Active Recreation Facilities

The vast majority of athletic fields, courts and other active recreation facilities are located in the Division of Urban Parks and Recreation. DCR's Urban Division manages twenty-eight (28) properties offering active sport facilities. These include tennis and basketball courts and baseball, softball, soccer and football fields.

The following information is provided to assist organizations and residents to reserve facilities and fields for organized sport or other recreation activities.

Use of DCR Tennis and Basketball Courts

DCR's tennis and basketball courts are available for public use free of charge and on a first-come first-served basis. We ask that you help to make these facilities available in the community by:

- Limiting your use to **one hour** when others are waiting to use the court.
- Reporting any damage to courts, nets, backboards or fences to DCR at 727-4708

Applications for Athletic Field or Facility Reservations

Applicants wishing to reserve any DCR field must be a resident of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Organizations applying to reserve fields must be licensed or authorized to operate in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. All applicants must be at least 18 years of age and the applicant or authorized representative must be present throughout the entire use of the rental.

Applications are not automatically renewed. Time slots and park sites are not guaranteed from one year to the next.

All applications and field permits are a matter of public record. Names of applicants and permitted users shall be made available upon request to other users, the media, and other interested parties.

The first step in reserving athletic field, court and other facilities is completion of the field and facility use application included at the end of this guide. Applications are also available on the internet at www.ma.gov/dcr/ or by calling (617) 727-4708.

Completed applications may be mailed to:

MA Department of Conservation and Recreation
Athletic Field Reservations
4 Woodland Road.
Stoneham, MA 02180

When to Apply

Daily Reservations

Single daily-use reservations may be requested after February 1st for spring and summer reservations and after May 1st for fall reservations.

Seasonal Reservations

Seasonal field reservations will be accepted twice a year.

Reservations for spring/summer (April – August) will be accepted between December 1st and January 15th.

Reservations for fall (late August – November) will be accepted between March 1st and April 15th.

Applications received after the ending date above will be accommodated on a first-come first-served basis for remaining space in field schedules.

Applications should be made a minimum of twenty (20) business days prior to the desired date of use. Applications submitted after this time may not be able to meet all the requirements for the reservation.

Processing Reservation Applications

All seasonal reservation requests will be reviewed by DCR staff according to the following timeline.

All spring/summer requests for seasonal field usage will be reviewed beginning January 16th.

All fall requests for seasonal field usage will be reviewed beginning April 16th.

All applications will be considered according to agency priorities for field use (see DCR priorities for field use on page 5) and the field schedule. DCR will make every effort to accommodate applications; however, space and time limitations may not allow the agency to grant all requests.

DCR may contact one or more groups during the scheduling period to explore alternative scheduling that will allow us to maximize field utilization and equitably accommodate as many requests as possible.

Applicants will be notified on or about February 1st of spring and summer field assignments.

Applicants will be notified on or about May 1st of fall field assignments.

All assignments are tentative pending payment of appropriate fees and documentation of necessary insurance or other required information as applicable.

Field assignment notifications will include a request for payment of the appropriate fee. Some uses may require that the applicant obtain a Certificate of Insurance or hire DCR Ranger or other security services to ensure public safety. These requirements will be noted on the field assignment notice.

The applicant should return full payment and proof of insurance (as necessary) within ten (10) business days after the date on the field assignment notification.

Actual Field Use Permits will not be issued until DCR has received required payment and insurance certificates (when necessary) have been provided. Field reservations will be cancelled and reallocated to other users if payment and proof of insurance are not provided within 20 business days of the notice of field assignment.

Reservations are not confirmed until the applicant receives the Field Use Permit. Applicants should not distribute publicity or invitations regarding field activities prior to issuance of the Field Use Permit. Separate fees must be paid for each field or time period used, even if located at the same park.

Athletic Field Use Schedule and Fees

Daily Rentals (2 or 3 hr periods

9am-12noon

12noon-3pm

3pm-5pm

5pm-7pm

*7pm – 9pm**

*9pm – 11pm**)*

**some field use times may not be available during early spring and late fall periods*

*** Late evening field use may only be scheduled on lighted fields and when*

neighborhood disturbance is not a concern

Athletic Fields	\$25.
Dilboy Stadium	\$87/ hr (5 hour min.; \$15 per hour for each additional hour)
Lighted fields	\$40 per hour electrical charge is added for use of field lights

Seasonal Rentals (total weeks may vary due to weather and other factors)

- *spring, early April to mid-June*
- *summer, mid June to late August*
- *fall, late August to early November*
- ***Please note, seasonal usage may be delayed or extended due to weather conditions. DCR shall have sole responsibility to determine when fields can accommodate use.***

Seasonal rentals shall be for 2 or 3 hr periods as follows:

- 9am-12noon
- 12noon-3pm
- 3pm-5pm
- 5pm-7pm
- 7pm – 9pm *Note, may not be available during all seasons*
- 9pm – 11pm *Note, late evening field use may only be scheduled on lighted fields and when neighborhood disturbance is not a concerns.*

Athletic Fields Seasonal Rentals \$100 per field per season-day *

* A season-day equals one daily rental (2 or 3 hr period as described above) per week for the activity season

Examples:

Rental of one field, for a two or three hour period one day per week for the spring season would cost \$100 for the season.

Rental of one field for a two-or three hour period on each of two days per week for the spring season would cost \$200 for the season.

Rental of three fields for two or three-hour periods on each of two days per week

for the spring season would cost \$600 for the season.

Lighted fields \$40 per hour electrical charge is added for use of field lights

Discounts and Waivers

Youth leagues with demonstrated financial hardship may apply for reduced fees for multiple “season day” purchases

DCR Priorities for Field Use

With increasing demands for the use of athletic fields and other facilities, the Department may not be able to accommodate every applicant. Therefore the Department applies the following considerations in allocating field use:

- ***Compatibility***
- ***Regional and Community Affiliation***
- ***User Group Needs and Opportunities***
- ***Partners for Healthy Communities***
- ***Years of Service to the Community***

Compatibility

- No events or activities shall be scheduled which are likely to damage fields, irrigation systems or other agency resources.
- Athletic fields designed and maintained for sports activities shall be primarily used for their intended purpose during appropriate seasons. Activities such as walks, fairs and other events that are not dependent on athletic field facilities shall not be scheduled on athletic fields during their primary season.
- No events may be scheduled before 9:00 am or past dusk, with the exception of lighted softball fields that may be scheduled no later than 10:00 pm.

Regional and Community Affiliation

DCR fields and facilities provide critical community access to active recreation activities. In addition, agency properties in the Urban Division are part of a regional network established to serve the citizens of the greater Boston area. In recognition of both local and regional needs the agency shall make available all fields and courts as follows:

- 70% of facility reservations shall be allocated to the local community
- 30% of facility reservations shall be allocated to the regional and statewide community

Regional or statewide reservations for seasonal field use must be submitted prior to the application deadline for consideration.

User Group Needs and Opportunities

Various groups require access to fields at certain times—schools during school hours, youth during the daytime, etc. DCR shall generally schedule fields according to the following guidelines.

- School organizations shall have priority use during school hours.
- Youth sports organizations shall have priority between the hours of 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm weekdays, between 8:00 am and 1:00 pm on Saturdays, and 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm on Sunday.
- Adult organized and informal sports activities shall have priority after 7:00 pm with extended evening hours on lighted fields.

Partners for Healthy Communities

DCR properties provide vital opportunities to promote active lifestyles that are essential to healthy communities. Organizations that encourage active and accessible recreation for youth, adults and seniors also play a vital role in community health. DCR will place higher priority on allocating field space to organizations that demonstrate their commitment to:

- Initiating standards for youth sports such as those established by the National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS) www.nays.org
- Encourage participation throughout the program community:
 - * Regardless of group affiliation or athletic ability.
 - * By advertising in community publications and other media
 - * By limiting fees to maintain affordability and/or providing scholarship opportunities for disadvantaged community members.
- Providing equal opportunities for all participants to play in both practice and games.

Years of Service to the Community

Many organizations have been providing healthy recreation opportunities to regional residents for years and even decades. Their long-term commitment and experience in delivering quality programs are assets to the community and the agency. Therefore, DCR will consider years of service in its determination of field allocation.

Cancellations and Refunds

Cancellation by the Applicant

DCR's cancellation policy has been developed to discourage the last minute cancellation of events. Our goal is to offer low-cost sports field use for organized groups and individuals. If a cancellation is received on short notice, the agency's ability to make the field available to other users is severely limited. The cancellation/refund policy is therefore structured to offer the greatest refund in instances where DCR has the highest probability of re-renting the field.

- Cancellation of single day field rentals must be made a minimum of seven (7) days in advance to receive a refund of daily reservation fees.
- Cancellation of seasonal field reservations must be made according to the following schedule to receive a refund of seasonal field reservations.
 - **Spring/summer seasonal cancellation must be made before March 15th.**
 - **Fall seasonal cancellations must be made before August 1st.**
- It is the applicant's responsibility to provide written notification of cancellations. Agency staff will not be held responsible for cancellations made by telephone. Cancellations will only be accepted from the applicant (the person who signed the reservation application), not from anyone else acting on their behalf. This policy is designed to prevent the unauthorized cancellation of an event.

Cancellation by DCR

The Department reserves the right to cancel any use of facilities and/or equipment in emergency situations or when deemed necessary for public safety or facility protection. In such cases, the Department will provide a full refund of all payments or provide an opportunity for future field use. Every effort will be made to notify the permittee of a necessary cancellation at the earliest possible date.

Refunds will not be issued for inclement weather. DCR cannot refund light costs. However, the Department will attempt to accommodate makeup dates at the end of the season.

Liability Insurance

All applicants must complete an indemnification form which protects the Commonwealth and its citizens in the event of accident or injury while using DCR fields. For some events and activities, the Department may require the applicant to obtain comprehensive general insurance. Notice of this insurance requirement shall be provided with the notice of field assignment. When required, insurance coverage must:

- Include a minimum limit of \$1,000,000 Combined Limit for bodily injury and property damage.
- Name the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, its officers, and employees as additional insured against any and all liability arising or resulting from your usage of said premises.
- The policy must read:
 Commonwealth of Massachusetts
 Department of Conservation and Recreation
 251 Causeway St.
 Boston, MA 02114
- Include the name of the facility and the dates of use.

The certificate of insurance for the required policy must be on file with the Bureau of Special Services and Events PRIOR to the use of the facility.

The applicant will be responsible for any and all damage to Department property or equipment. If after an activity, additional janitorial maintenance is required (in excess of normal cleaning services/time), the applicant will be charged accordingly.

The applicant will be held responsible for all actions, behavior, and damages caused by his/her participants, guests or attendees.

The individual or organization granted use is responsible for reimbursing the Department for any loss or damage to property caused by such use.

The Department has the right to revoke any permit(s) issued due to the group causing damage to the field by inappropriate behavior or activities caused by the group's use of the field.

Field Cleanliness

All field users share in the responsibility to help keep your fields clean and safe by requiring that players, fans and coaches place all trash in barrels or remove it from the site. If you find that your field is consistently littered by another group, please report concerns to DCR at (617) 727- 4708. Repeated complaints regarding a particular group may result in permit cancellation and/or denial of permit applications in subsequent years.

Rain Days or Wet Fields

On rain days, DCR staff will check field conditions and make a decision on use for that day by 12:00 pm Monday to Friday or by 8:00 am on Saturday and Sunday. Applicants should call DCR at (617) 727-4708 to confirm the status of the fields.

If a footstep leaves an impression in the turf or if the sod is removed easily with a cleat, this is considered a wet field.

Knowledge of a group playing on and damaging turf will result in the immediate cancellation of that permit. No refund will be granted.

Refunds will not be issued for inclement weather. However, the Department will attempt to accommodate makeup dates at the end of the season.

Field Rehabilitation

DCR may periodically remove fields from the reservation system for one or more seasons for rehabilitation. Steady use of fields results in soil compaction, turf damage and other problems which will result in poorer quality fields. The agency appreciates your patience and understanding when your favorite field is scheduled for rest or rehabilitation.

Restrooms

Please note, some properties do not have restrooms available. If you are renting a field at one of those parks, you may wish to rent portable facilities depending on the size and type of event. The Bureau of Special Services and Events can provide information regarding portable toilets. Restroom reservations should be made a minimum of twenty (20) business days prior to the desired date of use.

Lighting

Some fields are equipped for night lighting. Please contact the Field Reservations Office at (617) 727-4708 for information about lighted fields. In the event that lights are not operational when scheduled by your group, please contact DCR's Ranger Desk at (617) 727-1188

General Rules and Regulations

The Department retains the right to set conditions and requirements suitable to safe, reasonable, and orderly use of the DCR facilities.

Alcoholic beverages are not allowed on DCR properties without written permission from the agency. Alcohol use during a permitted event will result in revocation of the field permit.

Any person(s) violating the established Rules and Regulations or constituting a public nuisance may be required to leave the premises.

The misuse of the field, failure to conform to field regulations, or any other Federal or

State law, rule, or regulation, shall be sufficient reason for immediate termination of permit. No refund will be granted.

Permittees are only to use those fields and times specifically designated in the Field Use Permit. There may be another group following yours, so it is essential that your group vacate the field by the scheduled ending time.

Gambling on DCR property is prohibited. Gambling shall be defined as any game of skill, chance, or raffle, played with cards or any other device for money or any other representative item of value.

All food vendors on state property must follow normal public bid processes determined by the Department. Selling food or other items may be subject to an additional fee for the right to conduct sales on public property. Vendors must adhere to all State, County, and City health requirements. Sales of any kind must be approved in writing by the Department prior to the activity.

General Rules and Regulations (cont.)

All events charging an admission fee will require special written approval by the Department.

Amplified sound is not permitted in any park without special written approval by the Department.

DCR staff shall have the right to enter all fields at any time during any and all use for observation of activities.

The Department may revoke or suspend the right to make a reservation as a means of a disciplinary action.

Field use permits/reservations cannot be transferred, assigned, or sublet.

Field users are not allowed to apply any chemicals on the field or turf except field lining products.

All signs and advertising are prohibited without written permission from the Department. Signs or decorations may not be tied, stapled, etc. to plants or structures.

Egg toss or water balloon games are not permitted

No vehicles are to be driven or parked on DCR property, except under strict staff supervision. Any unauthorized vehicle on DCR property will be cited and towed.

DCR shall regulate or prohibit such activity or use, which in its judgment is determined to be of a hazardous nature or is potentially dangerous or damaging to property or is not in the best interests of the citizens of the Commonwealth.

DCR is not responsible for accident, injury, or loss of individual property.